



Leaving Cert English

Free Notes

Othello

Act 5 – Scene 1

Summary Act 5

Scene 1

Scene one opens with Iago and Roderigo lying in wait outside the brothel where Cassio visits Bianca. Iago gives Roderigo a sword and directs him to a place where he will be able to ambush Cassio. Iago then leaves the scene, although Roderigo asks him not to go too far in case he needs help killing Cassio. Aside, Iago tells the audience that whichever man dies, it will work in his favour. If Roderigo dies he won't be able to demand that Iago return the jewels, and if Cassio dies he'll never be able to defend himself against accusations of his affair with Desdemona. After thinking about it however, Iago decides that it is Cassio who must die, as he is handsome and well spoken and could convince Othello that Iago is a liar. Cassio enters, and an enraged Roderigo stabs at him. However, Cassio triumphantly reveals he is wearing armour under his cloak and immediately attacks Roderigo, wounding him. In the commotion, Iago sneaks up behind Cassio and stabs him in the leg. Iago immediately disappears and, not knowing who has stabbed him, Cassio falls. At this moment, Othello enters and hears Cassio's cries of murder. Othello believes that Iago has attacked him and killed him, and marvels at what a loyal friend he is. Taking strength from what he believes to be Iago's successful vengeance, Othello returns to his bedroom to kill Desdemona.

Lodovico and Graziano enter and hear Cassio's and Roderigo's cries. It's too dark for them to see who's calling, and they linger for a moment before going to help, aware that it could be some sort of trap. Iago takes the opportunity to enter then, carrying a light. He pretends to discover Cassio for the first time as he calls out for help, and then stumbles upon Roderigo. Iago takes the opportunity to stab Roderigo immediately, shouting that he is a murderer and a villain. During this time, Graziano and Lodovico are still unable to see Iago, and they are unaware of what he is doing. Finally, the three men come face-to-face, and they question Cassio about his injuries.

At the moment, Bianca enters the scene and begins to panic upon seeing the wounded Cassio. Iago questions Cassio but Cassio can give no answers or reasons for the attack. Iago holds the

light down, and exclaims with surprise that it is Roderigo from Venice who attacked him. Cassio says that he does not know Roderigo. Attendants carry off Cassio and Roderigo's corpse, and Iago suggests to Lodovico and Granziano that Bianca had a part to play in the attempted murder, pointing out how pale she has become. Emilia enters, and Iago imparts the whole tale to her, adding that this sort of thing should be expected when you visit whores. They interrogate Bianca, who admits that Cassio ate dinner with her, but steadfastly claims she has nothing to fear and is innocent. Iago takes Bianca under arrest, and sends Emilia to tell Othello and Desdemona what has happened. Iago ends the scene with an aside: "This is the night that either makes me or fordoes (undoes) me quite".

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